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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3290
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1105
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0976
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 1545
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0039
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2143
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, INL/AAE
DUSHANBE ALSO FOR DEA

E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN'S PRESIDENT CREATES NEW
COUNTERNARCOTICS AGENCY

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (U) During a January 18 meeting of Turkmenistan's National Security Council, President Berdimuhamedov signed a decree establishing a new State Agency for Combating Narcotics. The president said that he had made this decision "to step up efforts against trafficking in drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursors, and to ensure the implementing of Turkmenistan's international commitments to combat narcotics trafficking. The president appointed Murat Yslamov, previously head of the State Counternarcotics Commission and Chairman of the Department under the Presidential Administration for Analysis of the Activities of Law Enforcement and Military Agencies. In reporting the president's decision, Turkmenistan's state media noted that officials had agreed to establish a national body for combating drug trafficking during the January 9 visit of UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa (septel).

13. (U) The move was not a surprise. The president had first mooted the idea of establishing a counternarcotics agency during a January 11 cabinet meeting. He had noted that combating narcotics trafficking will be a government priority, and suggested that both law enforcement agencies and social organizations should be involved in this fight. At the January 11 meeting, he had instructed that public organizations under the umbrella of the national "Galkynysh" ("Revival") movement should play a larger role in fighting drug demand and trafficking. (NOTE: The "Galkynysh" movement includes public organizations such as the Democratic Party, the Women's Union, trade unions, youth unions, and the Veterans' Union. END NOTE.)

4, (SBU) COMMENT: Since it will take several weeks before Turkmenistan's new State Agency for Combating Narcotics will take shape, it is not immediately clear how the State Agency

will overlap and interface with other law enforcement agencies, the old Counternarcotics Commission, and social organizations. Some have suggested that it might take on a function similar to drug control agencies in other Central Asian countries, which primarily have an intelligence and investigative role. However, the president's call for greater involvement by social organizations -- a major step forward from the role Turkmenistan traditionally has assigned even its quasi-official "NGOs" -- seems to hint that the agency could be more than that and demonstrates Berdimuhamedov's recognition that anti-drug education for youth and other at-risk groups is essential if the government is to succeed in getting Turkmenistan's growing narcotics problem under control before it is too late. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND